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HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME XV

OCTOBER, 1922

NUMBER 4

SOCIAL UNREST AND SPIRITUAL AGITATION IN PRESENT-DAY JAPAN

MASAHARU ANESAKI

UNIVERSITY OF TOKIO

IN many aspects of social life Japan shares with the whole world the consequences of the World War, particularly in the intricate connections between social unrest and spiritual agitation. Japan had passed through two wars in recent times; they aroused the nation to national self-consciousness, but they brought also many new problems. Yet those wars were fought far from Japan itself, and did not bring home the disasters and miseries of war. In the World War Japan took a part, but it remained for the people a matter of distant lands. Thus they were comparatively indifferent to the various issues raised by the war, such as the combat between militarism and democracy, the questions of international justice and the self-determination of nations, the problems of peace and social reconstruction. Moreover, their indignation against the aggressive Occident led the people to discredit the pleas of the allies against Germany, and often to incline to sympathize with the German claim of "a place in the sun." These circumstances tended to keep the Japanese comparatively untouched by the problems created by the war. But the collapse of the great empires and the final outcome of the war could not fail to produce a profound impression among the Japanese. Although the people at large did not realize the whole situation, yet the gravity of the changes and problems was more or less fully grasped, and serious thought was stirred on social and religious questions.

In addition to the tidal waves coming from Europe, international conditions gradually caused apprehension. By reason

of the peculiar position of Japan during the war, her industrial and commercial prosperity made marvellous strides. The war-boom produced many *nouveaux riches*, a reign of the *nari-kin*,¹ and brought tremendous changes in life and ideas. The extravagant luxury of the rich capitalists called out high claims from the labor people; the one-sided accumulation of wealth, never before paralleled, was accompanied by an astonishing rise in the cost of living; the heavy claims of the army and navy stood in flagrant contrast to the miserable accommodations of schools and other works of culture. Strikes of laborers became frequent, the discontent of the educated classes rose to high tide, the miseries of the poorer classes increased; and the "rice riots" in August 1915 brought to every one's life and mind the dangerous features of the whole situation. The militarist Terauchi cabinet fell on that account; but the antagonism between the reactionaries and the radicals was thereby not at all assuaged, because the demands for certain changes and the pressure for reconstruction so alarmed the conservatives that they called up all available forces and means for combating the "dangerous" tendencies. Any expression of radical ideas was suspected to be connected with Bolshevik propaganda, for the Russian revolution of 1917 became a nightmare to the privileged classes. Demands for social reconstruction were interpreted as a mere imitation of revolutionary ideas imported from outside. The number of accusations of *lèse-majesté* increased year by year. Socialism, communism, and anything of similar tendency were indiscriminately condemned as potential cases of high treason. The Shinto religion and "national ethics" were resorted to against those "foreign ideas" which meant "dangerous" menace to the safety of the country; while dubious agents, — hypocrites, fanatics, or unprincipled preachers, — were mobilized for fighting the "dangerous ideas."

To the erratic nature of these reactionary measures corresponded the growing ferocity of agitation, manifesting itself

¹ This term was taken from Japanese chess, its occidental equivalent being a pawn raised to the dignity of a queen.

in the vigor of the protest, the extension of labor sabotage² and strikes, and the outspoken hostility toward the authorities and the rich. No previous period in Japan ever witnessed so many publications on labor questions, Marxism, syndicalism, social reconstruction, as did the years after the Great War. The vehement expressions of the plea for the proletariat seemed to subside after the economic depression which gave a serious blow to business in the spring of 1921; but the firm stand of the government and its party (Seiyu-kai) in behalf of the propertied classes has called forth the indignation of the unprivileged, and is working only to instigate disorders beneath the surface. The scandals exposed one after another, all on a larger scale than in most of the preceding years, were shown to have connection with members of the government party. The desperate steps taken by the quick-tempered radicals culminated in the assassination of a rich banker and then of the Premier Hara, both in 1921.

One cannot foresee what will be the outcome of this furious conflict. But one point is clear; a firm stand has been taken by the thoughtful middle class in seeking after a reconstructed foundation of culture on the basis of social solidarity and democratic freedom. Yet it remains to be seen whether a really constructive force can prove itself efficient without first a further outburst of destructive forces. In the midst of the furious conflict the young heir-apparent to the throne made in 1921 a journey to Europe, and it is believed that he was deeply impressed by the democratic freedom of English life. Thus hope is cherished that his regency, upon which he entered in November, may help to mitigate the situation, since social and political situations are much influenced by the attitude of the person in the highest position. But on the other hand the cleavage between the conflicting forces is giving more and more reason for concern, and the general situation may be described as one of ferment and agitation.

² To cite one instance, the author was surprised to find so much in vogue the word sabotage, and a new Japanese verb derived from it, *saboru*, when after an absence of only ten months he returned to Japan in October 1919.

The ferment is not limited to the political and social arena, but goes deep down to the very roots of human life, and the turbulence manifests itself in demands for wanton emancipation of the instincts of human nature. As ferocity and pugnacity mark the present phase of social movements, so the consideration of the instincts of self-preservation and perpetuation plays an important part in discussions of moral and social problems. Many a problem is reduced to that of sex, and naturalism is extended from the sphere of literature to other aspects of social life. The question of birth control, the feminist movement, the question of love and marriage, these and similar points are but different aspects of the general tendency; and many people are dissatisfied unless every veil that covers human instinct be relentlessly stripped off. In fact numerous cases of love or family tragedies have been made public, and opinions are freely expressed either in sympathy or in antagonistic criticism. These, and other, expressions of ideas on sex often exhibit indecent coloring; but in any case the instinctive nature of mankind is emphasized in various discussions, and thinkers are aware that the moral questions of the day cannot be successfully attacked without considering the fundamental fact of instinct. We see here a repetition of the conflict between the instinct and the reason which has several times shown its effects in the moral history of the Japanese people; but at present the manifestation of the instinctive nature finds freer expression than in any past period, and therein is shown an effect of the modern biological view of life. The question is not, as in the past, whether the instinct should be suppressed, but how it can or ought to be controlled by considerations drawn from the higher aspects of human life. Naked exposure of these questions may work as an explosive force, but may also lead to a more constructive stage of the re-estimate of all values through due account taken of biological factors. But it cannot be said that the agitation is at present taking a normal and wholesome course.

One marked feature of spiritual ferment in these circumstances is the general discrediting of all the existing religions,

including Christianity, and the appearance of new religious movements ranging from impetuous revivalism and great visions to calm self-renunciation. Wide is the gap between these two extremes, but common features can be discerned in them all, namely that social, and particularly economic, considerations are brought into close relation with the spiritual problems, and that the intuitive, or instinctive, nature of religion is emphasized in antagonism to the doctrinal and ecclesiastical systems. On the social and economic side more or less communistic ideas keep recurring in these new religions; and very general emphasis is laid on the instincts, either with a justification of human passions and instincts which used to be called sins, or with some kind of attempt at their transformation, not their suppression. We discern here an insurgent upheaval of the instinctive force of religion embedded in the depth of the soul, taking advantage of the opportunity given by social agitation and spiritual ferment in defiance of the discredited traditional religions. Most of these new forces are crude in expression and extravagant in their pretensions, but they show the vigor and nascent vitality of growing organisms. Some of them are extremely individualistic and sentimental, but many a representative leader has passed through stages of spiritual convulsion and attained a sincere insight into the mysteries of life. It is not enough simply to denounce the crudeness; full recognition must be given to the vigorous power arising in turbulence. In short, all this offers a bold challenge to traditional beliefs, represents an aspiration toward a thorough review of spiritual values, and is making an attempt at reconstructing human life from the depths of the demands of instinct. All the questions and movements revolve about the pivot of how to look at the basic nature of human existence, and of the question what aspect of that nature shall be re-valued and used in a reconstruction of human life, both individual and social.

The whole situation is highly perplexing, and it is no wonder that many troubled minds are at a loss as to how to discover some clue to a final reconstruction. They cherish an ardor of aspiration, but in their crudeness are often unable to cope with

the complications, and so try to arrive at a conclusion by wild groping and convulsive pretension. Any chance notion may, and often does, captivate minds in this condition, inducing them to preposterous affirmations, particularly those tinged by prophetic hues. The key-note of this state of mind is discontent with the present and a demand for reconstruction, and the tune that is played reveals the bombastic certitude of prophetic convictions. Numerous individuals and organizations represent this type of the bewildered mind. Though they appear and vanish again from one day to the next, or month by month, they all are but different manifestations of one and the same force of turbulent commotion stirring in the depths of perplexed souls. One who is troubled at heart often goes to an extreme of boastful self-assertion, and many a movement of this kind is characterized by an anomalous combination of desperate pessimism with unbalanced self-glorification.

The most typical of the movements of this kind has been a body called Omoto-kyo, or the teaching of the "Great Fundamentals," which was started by a crazy old woman who believed herself to be the messenger of the gods, sent by them to effect a fundamental "rebuilding" (*O-tate-naoshi* or *O-tate-kae* ³) of the whole world. The idea first came to her of herself, and she wrote down the messages of the gods in automatic writing, and so began her propaganda of rebuilding the world. Under maltreatment by her neighbors and persecution from the police her fervor grew to intense heat. Her teaching was further elaborated by a combined effort of humbugs and fanatics. Their ideas were prompted by fear and boastfulness, with much of chauvinism as well as of threats and lamentations; and their utterances bear a certain resemblance to some passages of the Old Testament prophets or of Mohammed. During the Great War they predicted an invasion of Japan, first by a German-Russian allied force (particularly through air attacks), and then, after the destined collapse of these two powers, by the United States. According to them, this coming

³ The words *tate-naoshi* and *tate-kae* are commonly used for rebuilding houses, and the woman was in fact the wife of a carpenter addicted to drink. The necessity of 'rebuilding' was indeed deeply felt by the woman through her own experience in life.

invasion will devastate the whole country, except their own locality, Ayabe, a little town in central Japan. But, they preach, the final day in the fate of Japan will be a turning-point in the world's history, for the hosts of the gods will arise from Ayabe and not only vanquish the invaders but subjugate the whole world. Thereafter the peace of the gods will prevail in a theocracy, the present believers being destined to be ministers, generals, and high officials, under the sole rulership of the messenger of the gods, the descendant of the woman founder. Beside these preposterous predictions and promises they pretend to work miraculous cures, and teach more or less communistic ideas, claiming to solve the social problem of all mankind.

This curious combination of fear and pride is not limited to this Omoto-kyo; many similar movements in Japan and Korea show nearly the same symptoms of the bewildered mind. The Omoto-kyo was suppressed by the government authorities, but its members are working along the same lines no less eagerly than before, only modifying those points of their teaching most distasteful to the government. These survivors and many others may at any time renew their vigorous propaganda, and there are many souls ready to fall victims to similar predictions and miracles. It is noteworthy that the individuals and bodies of this sort are in one way or another affiliated with the Shinto religion, and consequently antagonize Buddhism and Christianity. For this there is more than one reason. The first is a motive, on their part, to assume a protective color, because of the patronizing attitude extended to Shinto by the government. Even the most bombastic of these pretenders are often, if not usually, cowards, and feel safer under the protection of the Shinto name. Moreover, Shinto represents the primitive, and therefore instinctive, traits of religious life, in contrast to the "doctrinated" religions existing in Japan. Thus the rise of these Shinto movements is a part of the same emphasis on the instinctive nature of man which has been described above.

This trait, however, is not limited to Shinto, but can be found more or less in Buddhism and Christianity. Buddhism as a

body, or as an aggregate of church organizations, is hopelessly degenerate, and its clergy are utterly at a loss as to how to meet the perplexing situations presented on all sides. Yet its spiritual fountain is not without signs of a new outburst of geyser-like revival. In the course of the past two or three decades several Buddhist revivals have appeared one after another and passed away, but have left some impressions. At present one of the conspicuous features in the life of Buddhism is the rising interest in Shinran, the pietist reformer of the thirteenth century. In fact, his religion of absolute faith in Buddha's grace has as its counterpart a full recognition of all kinds of human weakness or sinfulness. Though not exactly justifying or advocating sins and passions, he emphasized that we could be saved even without purging ourselves from all the depravities of human nature, because of the overwhelming strength of Buddha's saving power. This aspect of Shinran's religion could easily be used as endorsing the naturalistic or biological view of human life, and in the past various signs of this combination of pietism and naturalism have shown themselves. Now the new vitality manifested in this form of Buddhism, particularly among the youth, is a phenomenon intrinsically connected with the surging tide of the emphasis on the instinctive side of life. The motive lies in the full acknowledgment of the wickedness of human nature, of the miseries and tragedies of life. This may be called an attitude of confession and contrition, but the modern followers of Shinran deny the necessity of remorse and contrition. On the contrary, they proceed to the delight of cancelling (or redeeming) all sins and obstacles through the all-embracing mercy of Buddha. All vile darkness vanishes, according to them, before the all-permeating light of his love, the love which can and ought to be experienced even by the most sinful beings. It is only one step from this joy in faith to a kind of glorification of human passions, and in fact the new force in Shinranism lies in the free delight of life even in vice and passion. To cite from one of the typical representatives of this movement:

Religion is nothing but yearning of a defective being after perfection. The humility of the soul by which it confesses without any reserve the bar-

renness of self that is full of falsehood and is bewildered and troubled, — this humility makes us aspire for the absolute reality which is rich, true, and stands beyond all commotion for ever. The lonesome cannot bear to remain alone, but ardently longs to be joined with an eternally beloved, — that is religion.

But this is not all. Reality, or love, is, according to this writer, not an abstract principle, but is to be personally experienced by everybody. Again, this experience needs no training in higher sorts of culture or contemplation, but just in daily life, the actual carnal life of every human being. Love is best exemplified by sexual love, because its secret is latent in every man and woman, which can only be brought forth to actual experience through contact with the other sex. Love is a union of both flesh and spirit, and one who is the best and most fervent lover in life is best entitled to be saved by Buddha's love. This was the religion of Shinran, according to this writer, and his faith amounted to a securing of the love of Buddha through love for other beings, — certainly love of all kinds, but especially sexual love. Various other points could be noted in the tenets and experiences of this writer and his fellows, but suffice it to say that they emphasize what they call "pure experience," coinciding with "pure love," and that they thus identify instinctive love with religious faith, because they see purity only in the life of primal instinct.

This strain of religious faith, somewhat vague and mystic though it is, exhibits a fire of ardor in finding the final resort of life in the primal motive of human life. It is doubtless sentimentalism, but, being something more than a mere play of sentiment, attempts to strike at the very root of the individual soul and to discover therein something beyond the individual. It amounts to a glorification of the instincts by transforming them through the realization of the all-pervading oneness of mankind in the very depth of its instinctive nature. The influence of this stream of naturalism is not limited to Buddhism; Christianity is affected by it. One of the important aspects in the Christian movement in Japan is that not a few independent thinkers are more and more alienated from church organizations, and share in the general movement of emphasizing the intuitive aspect of religious life. Their endeavor is to reduce

the Christian religion to the palpable fact of personal experience, and it therefore stands for the assertion of individuality, in contradistinction to ecclesiastical systems and to the emphasis laid on social work. Thus these independent Christians, or ex-christians, are individualists, not only in religious idea but also in their moral or social view of life. Some among them are Tolstoyans, some are worshippers of Walt Whitman, of Kierkegaard, and so on; and in this respect they are bound together with the individualists, whose affiliation otherwise ranges from mysticism to rationalism.

Faithful to their principle, these individualists would not organize themselves in any way, in spite of the extent of their sentiment of fellowship among themselves. It is therefore almost impossible to classify them and label them by 'isms.' Indeed, one of them well represents their tendency in this respect, when he says, to cite but one passage:

I discovered that I had been one of those who were to be called hypocrites in the Christian church.

I am not sorry that I have been alienated from the group in which the righteous, the hypocrites, the sinners, and so on, are distinctly labelled, and various persons treated according to the categories.

It [deserting the church] has been a long way round; but to gain a profound sense of dissatisfaction with my own life was, after all, the shortest way home. . . .

Is man the lord or the slave of destiny? This question puzzles me and leads me to melancholy. Confidence in God, the certitude of moral laws, or the foundation of science, the standpoint of humanity, all this will be unstable without a decisive solution of this fundamental question.

And the solution is offered by Love, the pure instinct. In love I embrace others, as I am embraced by others in love; and thus I and others make up the beautiful texture of life, by weaving together the woof of self and the warp of others. The better and profounder the self, the inner self, is developed, the better and the more profoundly is the external world embraced into self. The whole life is thus perfected. There is thereby no sacrifice, nor duty, but only the privilege of being grateful and the saturation of being enjoyed.

Christ embraced in his supreme love all mankind of the past, present, and future. . . . He was the man who experienced most fully the joy of loving self, and therefore loved and embraced them all into himself.

Only change the word 'Christ,' and where is the difference between this and the utterances of the Buddhist individualists? The latter delight in discovering that either Buddha

or Shinran was merely a human being like themselves; and similarly some Christians take bold steps in finding a human Christ. In the spring of 1921 appeared a book of 1,500 pages bearing the title *Shin-yaku*, that is 'The New Testament,' a life of Jesus. Its author was a man quite unknown before, who at one stroke attained high fame by that writing. The book is in the form of an historical novel, and beside a vivid delineation of the life of the Jewish people the author brings into high relief the human and humane aspects of Jesus' personality and life. Jesus is depicted as a man of fine sensibility, keen insight, and profound spirituality, but a visionary, often bewildered as to his own dispositions, guided by ecstatic visions and voices. The author seems to have been influenced by the Freudian psychology, when he depicts the love of Jesus for certain women, particularly Mary Magdalene, a love of which Jesus was not quite aware. The emphasis on the sexual instinct is strongly shown in the author's way of handling the secrets of the lives of many persons who appear in the stories, and of indicating thereby the discrepancy between the Law and Love. The most striking point in the book is the author's sympathetic attitude towards Judas Iscariot. Describing the character and temperament of Judas, an abandoned child of cynical nature, he depicts his betrayal of the Master as an experiment, so to speak, tried on Jesus, in the idea that the Kingdom of Heaven as he had preached it could only be realized through his death. The author means that while the other disciples were still holding the traditional conception of the Kingdom, and while Jesus himself was not yet quite clear as to his own idea, Judas caught somehow by a quick insight the necessary consequence of Jesus' teaching. In a later book bearing the title "Resurrection" the author goes further, even so far as to say that the title of his book implies a resurrection of Judas, the modern man free from conventions and hypocrisy.

These books are not the only ones which attempt to humanize Jesus; they find their companion in another life of Jesus, written by a Tolstoyan who founded a communistic settlement, the "New Community." There Jesus is represented as a simple human being of pure heart. He penetrated into the heart of

humanity through his love for his Father, and so reached the innermost depth of the human soul. To cite one passage from him:

I cannot bear to think of mankind devoid of the existence of Jesus. There is nothing more grateful in the world than that Jesus and Buddha have appeared among us. I cannot live without thinking of them. They are the largest flourishing vines. . . . I am here alone, but I can hear Jesus' words, can converse with Buddha, and similarly with Goethe, Whitman, Rodin, and many others.

O Jesus! What vigor I derive from you! . . . Pity this little brother of yours! . . . I am yet too little to converse with you as a friend, but hope to be finally one day a friend who can talk with you without any reserve. In these days I feel that I know more and more the truth of what you have spoken.

This is not the place to examine all these views of Jesus, but what is to be noted is that they are all an expression of the ardent desire cherished by the youthful spirit to disentangle from all convention and formalism, to re-estimate and transform all values. These writers, together with their numerous admirers, will not be satisfied unless everything be reviewed in a new light, the light emanating from their own heart and soul. It is also a manifestation of the attempt at naturalizing Christ, unbinding him from all the fetters of ecclesiastical and missionary conceptions. But naturalization is by no means identical with nationalization, for even "national" codes of ethics, or any other national principles, are nothing but hypocrisy unless recast and rewrought by the vigorous vitality of the unfettered, aspiring soul. Thus we see, both in Buddhism and Christianity, that the young aspiring souls are radical individualists trying to review and reconstruct human life from the very bottom of its primal nature.

These individualists have certainly been moved by social unrest in general, but their ideas and principles have little to do directly with the pending questions of the present time. On the other hand many an earnest mind has been in close touch with the social troubles of the day, and consequently bears witness to the intimate ties binding together the social and the spiritual aspects of human life. The representatives

of this tendency are not merely social workers, but are convinced of the necessity of founding social reconstruction upon the spiritual rebirth of each and every individual. According to this view the solution of social problems is not merely by the application of a certain religious principle or dogma, but will be a natural consequence of a new life, a new departure of spiritual life, a resurrection after the death of the narrow self entangled in conventions and traditions. Not an immersion of self in piety or contemplation, but the life of active work guided by spiritual visions and imbued with religious ideals, — this is the key-note of the movements started by those souls who have passed through the discords of social and economic troubles and have attained a higher harmony of spiritual peace and religious zeal. We can say that nearly all the religious workers of earnest mind belong to this category. But their solutions of the problems, their methods and aims, as well as their affiliations, whether explicit or implicit, exhibit a wide range of diversity. Here we may single out two most prominent figures, one Christian and the other Buddhist, though not in the regular sense.

The first, Toyohiko Kagawa is now a name so well known that any writing bearing it is read with keen attention, while his person is worshipped in some quarters as the “saviour of the poor” or as a labor leader, though he is at the same time criticized in various ways. Whatever the merit of his person may be, and whatever he may in future finally prove to be, his work for ten years in the worst of slums and his ideas on the meaning of social work deserve close attention and high admiration. He has recently left his abode in a slum and has been evangelizing among the aborigines of Formosa; and this change in his interest is interpreted in different ways. But our interest here is not in his future but in the tendency he has represented during his work in the slums and for labor people. He was educated in a Presbyterian seminary, but being dissatisfied with theology and church, he trained himself, working among the lowest people, with the conviction that the real God and his love could only be found among the lowest of people. But let us hear what he says himself:

Love toward sinners! Human nature can first be established in a society in which one can pour love even upon sinners. This is a problem too delicate to be settled by materialistic socialism, which seeks to solve all questions through that of bread. On the other hand the bold attitude of the carpenter Jesus, who "came to call sinners to repentance," was, perhaps too religious to attract ordinary human beings; yet the aim of all and every movement for reconstruction is finally to arrive at that point. A perfect society is one where even sinners are loved and protected, so that they may be led up to repentance. . . .

The restoration and elevation of human nature can be impeded by no one. Human nature, that is the sublimest of all the architectures in the world. . . . But Capital and the Factory are nowadays forcing this grand work of art [the human being] to stand beside an oil-can and to live a constricted life among machinery. A very devil is the modern factory.

Yet sun-light comes in through the windows of the factory, and reveals that its rooms are teeming with children of God. There will come a time when the figures of these children of light, and not the machine, will be exalted and adored in the name of freedom and light. The sun is rising, and human architecture is near its completion.

It was this fundamental faith that induced him to work in the slums and enabled him to face all the hardships and desperate situations. In a novel which is practically his autobiography, Kagawa speaks thus of the hero of the story:

He is well aware that social policies of temporary nature or sensational theories of social revolution are not the way to save mankind; and he has settled down in the slums in order to see what is the power of God that saves man from the vilest depth of sinful life. He does not say to the poor either that they should attempt a revolution or that the rich alone are vicious, but he preaches only the way of salvation. And that amounts to the necessity of transforming all the aspects of human nature, including instincts, temperaments, and intelligence. Any external force is unable to save human society, and nothing is more important than the power of God working within every one's self. This is his religious faith that is guiding his whole life.

In these and other utterances backed by his life and work, we see the strong, yet meek, personality of Kagawa flooded with the rays of hope and faith, even in the midst of the most dismal shadows of the slum. He is not so much a social reformer with definite programs of policies, as a spiritual reformer full of conviction and vision, yet never losing himself in mere ideas, but working persistently and assiduously for the erection of what he calls "human architecture."

Another representative of the same tendency of identifying the social and the spiritual problems is Tenko Nishida, a man

who had passed through vicissitudes of success and failure in his life, and finally entered a life of humility, non-possession, and service. He was born in a Buddhist family and grew up as a Buddhist. He had once been an industrial enterpriser; but his failure, chiefly due to the pressure of difficulties heaped upon him by his capitalists and workmen, caused him to become desperate and addicted to vice. Even in the pit of despair, however, he never ceased to meditate on the meaning of life, and particularly on the foundation of the existing economic system and social structure. In his despair and agony he decided to renounce everything, his family and his own self too. For a while he lived like a beggar or hermit, without paying heed as to how to feed himself; still he was able somehow to live. One day he picked up grains of rice on the streets and sustained life on that. Like a flash an idea came to him, that man lives not by the virtue of his own merit, but by the free gift of Nature, and that what he once had deemed to be his work and possession was not in fact his own but a gift of grace. Then he served a friend's family by taking up menial work and claimed nothing in return but a bare living. There he himself was surprised to see the profoundly edifying effect of his humble service upon himself as well as upon the whole family of his friend, including the servants, through the bountiful spirit of ardor in mutual service and the profound sentiment of mutual indebtedness with which his life inspired the whole circle.

This experience, together with his meditation in solitude, accomplished a revolutionary conversion in his spirit and life, and thereafter, for now more than ten years, he has continued to live up to his principle of non-possession and service, serving any family which would receive him as such. He does not know how to name his religion or principle or his God, nor does he try to formulate his teaching. But he shows his Buddhist heritage in often calling the final resort of his life the "Universal Light," the source of all being, the giver of grace and gift. His life of humility is in itself his faith in the Light, and he admonishes his fellows to live the life of service rendered to all fellow beings, and therefore to the Light. He thus com-

bines in his life and faith the parts of Mary and Martha, and in that respect differs from the Shinshu pietists, his former fellows, who denounce any work as an obstacle to piety. His religion can be formulated in one way or another, as one of his fellows has formulated it in Buddhist terms; but he is better seen in his own life than in teaching, and many of his fellows are those who saw him and have adopted his way of living. Instead of describing his life, however, let us quote from his discourses. He says, for example:

When you review the life of Buddha, or Christ, or any other sage or founder of religion, you cannot but be struck by their conviction that life is secure without possession. You would say that it is a mere Utopia in the world of modern civilization to live without property; but you think so simply because you have little faith in the Universal Light.

The life of my fellows will be a living testimony, and I am convinced of the truth [of my principle that the desire for possession is the root of all evil].

First, renounce everything, property or claim. Accumulate nothing for tomorrow. Be ready to renounce even your life at any moment. Therein you will find an unspeakable satisfaction.

Heaven and earth, mountains and streams, all are Buddha himself. It does not matter who does or does not possess this or that. All belongs to all. The whole cosmos is a totality, subject neither to increase nor to decrease. When I have realized this, I have seen the Universal Light face to face.

Another passage speaks of humility:

Buddha left his royal palace and went about alms-begging. Christ washed the feet of his disciples. Laotse, St. Francis, Tosui, and many other spiritual leaders lived the life of humility (each in his own way).

Humility embraces everything.

Humility may be compared to earth which is the mother of all.

Humility bears all and gives to all. . . .

Destruction creeps into every one who takes pride in his own achievements, because the desire for achievement implies possession and monopolization.

When you examine the depth of the matter, all the conflicts of human life are rooted in egoism.

Renounce your own interests and serve others, in penitence, the penitence that the root of all evil and sin is in yourself.

So train yourself that you can serve anybody in any way, when requested; and therein polish the lustre of your own soul.

This is humility and the beginning of the life of true fellowship.

These are some points in Nishida's principle of life, and his fellowship consists in an absolutely free community, where any

one may come and go according to his own idea and will. Nishida has a cottage among the hills in Kyoto, which furnishes abode to those who come. Those men and women meet in the morning for prayer or confession, then every one of them goes to any place where work is requested, and comes back to the cottage in the evening, or may stay out, according to circumstances. The cottage is named the "Garden of One Lantern,"⁴ and may be called a convent; but no rule is imposed upon the life of fellowship, every one is free to think or work according to his choice, the only condition being a sincere conviction in the life of service and non-possession. The cottage in Kyoto is in no way a centre for the movement, because many another Garden of One Lantern may grow, where the fellows are found. In fact, one of the houses of One Lantern is being organized as an infirmary, and other similar houses may come into existence.

Nishida, who was once an industrial enterpriser, seems to have much organizing talent, and his operation of a mine started a few years ago is a matter of keen interest to all observers. Some of his fellows have organized factories, somewhat after the manner of a coöperative society. They insist on non-possession and regard these properties as a mandate entrusted to them for serving mankind. This is quite natural to the apostle of the Kingdom of Non-possession, because his new life emerged out of his doubts about the existing social structure, and his principles have finally to attack the economic problems of the day. It is yet to be seen how Nishida's "Community for Propagating the Light" (*Senko-sha*), as he calls his industrial organization, will proceed in its enterprises; but we see here one of the attempts at establishing fundamental connections between the economic and the spiritual life of mankind.

Another point to be noted is the close sympathetic ties between Buddha and St. Francis of Assisi conceived by these

⁴ The Japanese name is *Itto-en*, which is derived from the story of a poor woman who brought only one lantern in dedication to a great festival in memory of Buddha, where the rich brought thousands. The story further says that the one lantern of the poor woman was brighter than any of the numerous ones, because Buddha valued the piety of the woman more than that of the others.

fellows. In fact, Nishida started his new life quite spontaneously, even apart from his Buddhist heritage, but his conversion gradually revealed to him the life of Buddha in a new light, and similarly attracted his attention to the Christian saint who served lepers and preached to birds and wolves. Nishida says in one passage that if he should meet the Seraphic Saint even today, he would ask him how he would organize industrial life so as to solve the fundamental questions of social life. It will be evident to every observer how similar is the life of Nishida to that of Buddha or St. Francis; and it is natural to Nishida, a modern man, that he is not proceeding to create a monastic life like his predecessors, but a community life having a background of economic organization. But as his spiritual principle is a revolutionary force in religion, so his economic idea and enterprise are challenging the modern world by a radical reconstruction.

Thus we may call Nishida's life a modern Buddhist-Franciscan movement; and here we see the two bright suns of humanity meeting in Japan and in process of fusion into one light and heat, — the sun of wisdom from the Sakya clan, who shone out of the slopes of the Himalaya, and the sun of love, of whom Dante sang in adoration that he had arisen from among the pure lotus flowers in the waters of the Ganges. Whether the "One Lantern" will really "propagate the Light," that remains to be seen by future historians.